

AUGUST 2020

USABH

MAGAZINE
INAUGURAL EDITION

ALSO INSIDE

**FROM DESERT
TO DEK**

They're Ballin'
in Texas

**TURN BACK
THE TIME**

with the Lunatics
from New Jersey

PLUS

**A LETTER FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

COVER STORY

“MASS MAN”

U20 Boys National Team Forward
Matt Kendall, Goes on Our **Hot Seat**



2020 UPCOMING EVENTS



AUGUST 7TH-9TH
CRANBERRY CLASSIC
CRANBERRY, PA | PENGUIN, BEAVER, CADET, U20



AUGUST 19TH-23RD
NDA 3V3 SUMMER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT
BETTENDORF, IA | MENS



SEPTEMBER 11TH-13TH
US DEK HOCKEY NATIONALS
LEOMINSTER MA | MENS A/B, WOMENS



SEPTEMBER 18TH-20TH
BAUER NEW ENGLAND CLASSIC
LEOMINSTER MA | PENGUIN, BEAVER, CADET, U20



SEPTEMBER 18TH-20TH
FORCE HOCKEY FALL CLASSIC
GLOUCESTER TWP, NJ | MENS B/C/D/NOVICE, WOMENS OPEN



SEPTEMBER 25TH-27TH
**BALLHOCKEY.COM WORLD OUTDOOR
BALL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS**
BARRIE, ONT | MENS A/B/C, WOMENS



OCTOBER 9TH-11TH
US OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS
FITCHBURG, MA | MENS A/C/NOVICE, WOMENS A/B



OCTOBER 16TH-18TH
**BALLHOCKEY.COM WORLD OUTDOOR
BALL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS**
BARRIE, ONT | MENS D, OVER 35, COED OPEN, COED COMP



OCTOBER 17TH-18TH
OKTOBERFEST TOURNAMENT
DRACUT, MA | WOMENS A, B/C, U16



OCTOBER 22ND-25TH
TEAM PITTSBURGH CLASSIC
PITTSBURGH, PA | CHIPMUNK, PENGUIN, BEAVER, CADET

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings USA Ball Hockey Family,

On behalf of everyone at USA Ball Hockey, we hope that everyone is doing their best to get through the challenges facing all of us in these strange times. We have all had to make many sacrifices this year, but we are Americans, and Americans have a tendency to come out of the ashes better than they did going into the fire. We are confident that our lives will be back to normal very soon.

Some very good news to report from the international ball hockey community. After several meetings, the ISBHF was able to move all events from 2020 to 2021. We were able to secure the same arenas, the same hotels, and even made the players age eligible in 2021 as long as they were eligible in 2020. In other international news, the Finnish Ball Hockey Association has been officially recognized by the Finnish Olympic Committee. This adds yet another nation that is recognized by their Olympic Committee in the ISBHF family of nations. This is another huge step towards the ISBHF's long term goal of gaining Olympic Recognition.

Here in the USA, I am happy to announce that we are inching closer to being open for player registration for the 2021 calendar year. Safety, security, fair play, and overall organization of the sport is paramount to all of us at USABH. We are in the midst of accomplishing something that this sport has never seen. True organization, common rules, player insurance, training and continuing education for coaches and referees, concussion training and abuse awareness training are some of the highlights of what we are rolling out for the 2021 year. It's going to be an incredibly huge step toward our long term goals.

We are also working on some things that will get more and more young people playing our great sport. I'll give you some details about that in the next newsletter. For now, stay safe, have a great summer, and tell your friends about the sport. Lets get more people playing!

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Banks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Chris Banks
President
cbanks@usaballhockey.com

MASS MAN

By: Steve Scian

MATT KENDALL U20 Boys National Team Forward



PLAYER SPOTLIGHT

Age: 19

Hometown: Leominster, MA

Club Team: Leominster Rams

Career: 16 years

Favorite Food: Sushi

Favorite Pro Sports Team:
New England Patriots

Additional Activities:
Ice Hockey and Jiu-Jitsu

Are you born with hockey in your veins? Were you raised in an environment where the sport is culture? Matt Kendall, a forward for the USA Ball Hockey U-20 National Team, exemplifies both, and credits his genetics as well as being raised in a major hockey hub as contributors to why he is heading to Switzerland in June of 2021.

Matt is a true student of the game, and says he is constantly thinking of ways to elevate his play. Off the rink, Matt studies ways to optimize his workouts in order to have them translate to the rink. Improving his play and optimizing his workouts is not all Matt does to be a better player and athlete. He likes to eat as healthy of a diet as possible, while making sure he is hydrated at all times. Before the game, his mental preparations include meditation and going through game scenarios in his head. Matt has grown up playing against some of the best players and teams in the world, which he likes to remind himself of before games to boost his confidence.

Growing up in a town that is considered by many to be the “Mecca of Dekhockey,” Matt looked up to many homegrown players in the town of Leominster, Massachusetts. Specifically, Matt mentions Bobby Houser, Cody Warila, Tyler Warila, Korey Wilson, and Dante Suarez as the players he admired, and who can blame him? Matt’s uncle,

Steve Kendall, has been another great role model to Matt. Steve, a decorated defenseman and a participant on many U.S. National teams, just so happens to be considered one of the best players to have ever played in the last 50 years. Matt mentioned, “I have never watched a better defensive pair than Steve Kendall and Joe Russo. The fact that I’m able to play with and against all of these guys now, in



The “Hot Seat” Questions

Question: Who wears the best ball hockey jerseys?

Matt: *The Ottawa GodFathers*

Question: On a breakaway, who is the toughest goalie to beat?

Matt: *Tyler Crawford of the Leominster Americans*

Question: Where is your favorite facility to play ball hockey?

Matt: *The Leominster Dekhockey Center (LDHC) in Leominster, Massachusetts*

Question: Which NHL player do you resemble most in style of play?

Matt: *Mitch Marner of the Toronto Maple Leafs*

Question: Who has the hardest shot you’ve ever seen?

Matt: *Drew Albright, Pittsburgh Gods*

both leagues and tournaments, is just a dream come true.” What’s even more of a dream to Matt is that he is currently teammates with his Uncle Steve on the Leominster Rams.

When speaking of his own career, Matt tells us that playing alongside his coach, Teddy Reynolds, has been a major highlight. Matt credits his knowledge and understanding of the game of ball hockey to Coach Reynolds. “Coach has one of the best hockey minds that I’ve ever been around. When I had the chance to play next to him, I saw how proud he was. That was one of the best moments for me,” Matt said.

With all Matt has accomplished in his young career, he would tell other young players to really hone the fundamentals of the game. He says, “A strong base is what is necessary to become a great player.” Matt looks to have a great tournament season when play resumes and we have no doubt he will be ready to represent the USA in 2021.



TURN BACK THE TIME

By: Dan Coldwell

NORTH JERSEY LUNATICS

“I think back and I really thought it would last forever.”
- John Spano

There is a lifespan for everything. Teams rise up. Teams fall down. A new generation of players takes over. When the end comes, there is no farewell tour. There are no retirement ceremonies, no parades. It ends on the rink... but the players take with them the memories and the friendships.

The North Jersey Lunatics dominated dek and street hockey in the northern part of the Garden State for over a decade. From the late 80's to the late 90's, starting in rinks with concrete surfaces and graffiti on the boards, this group of strong personalities became the most successful North Jersey “A” team in the region's history.

They had an iconic logo, pulled from a Pink Floyd album along with their team nickname, and a collection of toughness and character that makes success expected, and failure devastating. The driving force of the team was captain Steve Hill, a person so competitive he once replaced his older brother off the team. “We wanted to win so bad,” Steve said. “When you lose you get so frustrated. I would do anything to make the team better. If there was a bully, we would get a bigger bully to take care of that bully.” During the Lunatics' run they had 2 star goalies man the crease. “Steve went out and got specific guys and made the team better with each addition,” said goaltender Karl “The Truth” Mueller.

But the story begins in local leagues, when they were known as the New Milford Lunatics and they were battling other powerhouses like the Bergenfield Flyers and Newark Riots. Those league games resembled an older, tougher

brand of hockey that used to be played in the NHL. But their dominance soon outgrew local competition. “We couldn't play in local leagues anymore. It wasn't fair. We had a stacked team for our area and we couldn't play as Lunatics anymore,” Steve said.

The Lunatics evolved over a few years, adding superior talent by branching out from the small New Milford perimeter to recruit from all across North Jersey. By 1988-89 the Lunatics were appearing regularly in most tournaments from Lancaster to Leominster, and by the end of their run they had 20+ tournament championships on their resume.

However, with the lack of tournaments in their own backyard, it meant they were always having to travel, which hurt their ability to have a full roster to take with them. “If we would have had more tournaments in North Jersey then we could have fielded a loaded roster. We never got to play in our own backyard,” says Steve.

Defenseman Jim Potash, who recently played with USA in the over-50 SuperSeries in St. Catherines agrees, “There is a frustration with Lunatics. Looking back we were just a little short. We wanted to win with 12 guys. We would go to the grave thinking that was the right thing, but it wasn't. We needed to have that good 3rd and 4th line and 5th or 6th defenseman, but we wanted to go out there with 2 lines and 4 defense and try to win it all.”

The Lunatics had the respect of the peers. It was a different style of tournament hockey back in the early 90's. The game was much more physical and the rinks were a lot smaller. “They were extremely talented. They would come to tournaments with 10-12 guys and compete with every top team and sometimes win. Hardest





working bunch of guys I have ever played with or against,” said South Jersey Force legend Chris Caplan.

Steve’s other brother, Vinny, was a pillar on the blue line during the Lunatics’ run. “Our game, we didn’t have the most skill, but our forwards never stopped running and forechecking. It seemed like we pinned teams in their zone. We played so many tournaments where there were more skilled teams than us... but nobody outworked us. Our forwards just ran and ran.”

Karl Mueller was with the Lunatics as they started out for the first 5 years or so. After he moved to Texas they were able to replace him with another star goalie, Chris “Arch” Arrichiello. “I was fortunate to become a Lunatic. Without a doubt the greatest team I ever played on. They were some of the greatest times of my life.”

A familiar argument across all sports is how the past would fare against the present.

“We were nasty,” Potash said. “We definitely played with a big time edge. But all of the North Jersey teams did. That was how it was in league play. We played with a big time edge and that was part of our game. It is kind of missing in today’s game. It’s all skill and no edge anymore. Intimidation was a big part of it. I would say we compared to the Lowell Raiders. They were a team that played a lot like us... hustled, tough, hard nosed. That temper playing



with an edge got us in trouble and lost us games. We were together, we played hard but when we went over the line with dumb penalties that cost us too. There is a balancing act with emotions and toughness for sure.”

“The Raiders were one team I personally did not like playing against,” Vinny jokes, “They were bigger than us.”

Mueller agrees, “The game has changed so much, the physicality of our defense... I wonder how much time we would spend in the box because the game changed so much.”

When asked about lasting impressions of their time with the Lunatics... some familiar themes stand out. There is a strong bond amongst a lot of former



“Great couple of years...These guys are some of the best teammates and friends.”
- Karl Mueller

LUNATICS PRIMARY ROSTER DURING THEIR RUN

Chris Arrichiello	Chris Massey
Brad Bumbaco	Rich Matifari
Dean Bumbaco	Karl Mueller
Rob Bumbaco	Joe Muniz
Robbie Carr	Paul Rubino
Mike Cassidy	Mark Rutherford
Jeff D'Agostino	Jim Potash
Rosario Danielle	Matt Sabato
Chris Giordano	Fernando Santos
Johnny Giordano	Norman Schmelz
Jim Hill	John Spano
Vinny Hill	Dave Simone
Steve Hill	Mike Tesauro
Darren Lucas	Bob Volonino

players, and this team is no different. Most are still in contact often, with social media helping them follow each other. Many still play together in local house leagues. However it is the memories of being together on road trips, the joking in the locker room, the pride that is shared when you take the rink while representing your home. "Great couple of years," Mueller says. "These guys are some of the best teammates and friends."

How does the captain feel looking back on the team he helped build?

"As a tournament team I am disappointed, disappointed in myself," Steve says. "I always micromanage and second guess... What could I have done differently? I always strived to be better. I never thought I played up to my potential. I always felt like we didn't make enough of a mark in tournaments. Locally we were so dominant, but I felt like we could have won more."

"We did underachieve," Mueller adds. "We underachieved when we could have been better in tournaments. We won in Lancaster, then the next year we lost in quarterfinals."

But part of being great are the expectations you put on yourself. The Lunatics started as a league team when seasons spanned months and the games were on the verge of a brawl after every battle in the corner. When it was over, they had dominated locally, and won more tournaments than most teams could ever dream of. Eight regulars are already in the Mid-Atlantic Ball Hockey Hall of Fame, with more likely to come.

"We had a great run," says Potash. "We were a tight group. Our motto was we had to beat the team, beat the refs, out drink everyone and steal their girlfriends too."

While the Lunatics may be retired, they were one of the 12 teams to be in the Cool Hockey Events NHL20 Tournament. So if you want to see them in "virtual" action, the links to their games are below.

[Leominster Rams vs Lunatics](#)

[Penn Hills Arsenal vs Lunatics](#)

[Rhode Island Rage vs Lunatics](#)

[Leominster Americans vs Lunatics](#)

[Garden State Warriors vs Lunatics](#)







FROM DESERT TO DEK

By: Steve Scian

THEY'RE BALLIN' IN TEXAS

The sport of ball and street hockey is beginning to flourish in the great state of Texas. Yes, you heard that right, Texas is growing the game of ball and street hockey. Most people do not think of hockey when they think of the southern land, but don't tell that to the members of Texas Ball Hockey and Dallas-Fort Worth Street Hockey. According to Harry Sye, a member of DFW Street Hockey, ball hockey is growing in popularity in Texas, and there are plenty of opportunities to play.

Ball hockey in the Austin area was originally run by a group called the "Streetbirds," who were playing hockey outdoors on tennis courts in the Texas heat. When the league runners moved out of town, Dan Skemp was one of the few remaining members trying to keep hockey afloat in the area. Skemp, along with others, such as Lemar Ortiz, currently manage Texas Ball Hockey, formerly known as Austin Street Hockey.

At the time of his move to Texas, Lemar Ortiz worked in retail management, setting his own hours of work, flexible enough

to help manage the growth of the league. He grabbed the reigns in running most operations; scheduling games, contacting players, promoting online, collecting funds, ordering merchandise/jerseys, and organizing the social events. Ortiz, now an executive board member of Texas Ball Hockey, grew up in New Jersey, and discovered ball hockey right around the time he was in college. "As someone who enjoyed watching ice hockey, but had never learned to skate, I loved the accessibility of the game," he says. "You could just pick up a stick and



walk out there.” Ortiz and the Austin boys started off playing monthly, then weekly before moving to twice a week, which evolved into a competitive league. “When I moved to Austin from New Jersey, I just had two knee surgeries and was on the shelf for a bit, but still searched online to see when I could start playing again. But there was no ball hockey league to speak of,” Ortiz shared. Like most warm-weather hockey communities, roller and ice hockey have a presence in these towns, “but I didn’t see anything on social media for the sport I love to play,” he continued. “Luckily, about a year later, when my knee had healed, I did another search and noticed a Facebook group had popped up thanks to Dan Skemp (our current league president), who was trying to resurrect the street hockey presence that Austin had a couple years prior.”

Skemp, Ortiz, and the gang, realized they had to start somewhere. “Our group in Austin started as 6 or 7 of us playing pick-up ball hockey on a mini-rink with rubber filled wiffle balls. Sometimes we’d have only one goalie, sometimes we’d play with the nets down, yet, no matter the circumstances, we had a core handful that were showing up for the pure love of ball hockey,” Ortiz tells us. Those who play the game anywhere in the world can relate. The Austin crew understood that playing ball hockey in any form is far better than no hockey at all.

As the sport began to grow in the Lone Star State, so did the amount of players, and the organization made the move to play indoors at Austin Sports Arena, a risky move at the time. Considering, up until that point, hockey was free of charge, there were doubts about the commitment with a cost factor now in play. Those worries were quelled quickly, and the league gained players due to a closer proximity to downtown Austin, plus the perk of being indoors, away from the desert heat. Ortiz credits the uprise of a major city, and the timing of it all, as lucky contributors to the program’s rising success. “I think we knew that with Austin becoming one of America’s fastest growing cities, we would have other folks, like myself, moving here from places where ball hockey was a locked in part of their weekly life. We were in a great position to be the ones providing that experience if we stayed focused and worked hard to promote.”

The year of 2016 turned out to be huge for hockey in Texas, as Austin Street Hockey was renamed “Texas Ball Hockey” and became an official non profit organization thanks to the work of many passionate volunteers, specifically, Jim Nicholson. Nicholson made a huge push for the league to become a recognized 501(c)7 in the state, which has led to great opportunities, including fundraising with the Texas Stars

AHL minor league ice hockey organization. With all those moving pieces and a career move for Ortiz from retail into education, responsibilities were spread to a now 10 person executive board. “Having a group of guys and girls who are as emotionally invested in our league, and are willing to carry some of the workload, has made everything a lot more manageable, and we’ve seen great overall results because of their efforts,” Ortiz credits his team.

What used to be pick-up hockey at the park, became a league with set rosters and the first championship trophy, “Lord Danely’s Pint.” So what was the trick? Programs all over the country, with similar stories, want to know the secret to how growth works. The answer, EFFORT! “We maximized our social media content and really pushed word of mouth with our players, offering things like discounts to players who recruited newcomers to the league. We printed business cards, then gave everyone a stack to pass out to anyone they bumped into at bars downtown or Texas Stars games that had



an interest in playing,” Ortiz tells us. He continued, “We hosted free nights of hockey as ‘Kickoff Parties’ for new seasons, so that anyone on the fence about joining could give it a test drive first. Typically, about half the folks who attended those ‘one-time’ events would immediately sign-up for their first season that night.” Now, six years later, they have over 60 players in their Wednesday Night League, 20-30 playing in Sunday pick-up, 10-15 girls in their women’s program, one successful youth summer program under their belt, and three national tournaments that have grown exponentially each time they’ve hosted. In November of 2016, Texas Ball Hockey hosted their first event, “Anarchy in Austin” and sent their first travel team away to play in a tournament outside of the city. In just a few short years, this group of casual pick-up hockey players created a home for ball hockey that had to now find a way to avoid turning away participants and a way to increase their capacity as they faced a major dilemma.

With a league, now fully maxed out, there were no time slots available to play. Then, in 2017, everything was put to a halt by the closure of Austin Sports Arena – Texas Ball Hockey’s home. This sent the league to Cedar Park until a final decision was made on ASA. Luckily, ASA was reopened thanks to the Rockin’ City Rollergirls and former league tenants who invested together to gather the funds. The current home of Texas Ball Hockey has since been renamed “Rock Sports Arena.”

Despite the difficulties at the end of 2017, Texas Ball Hockey came back, and when they did, they were bigger than ever. Since 2018, TBH has increased enrollment tenfold, they have established their first ever Women’s league and have formed a partnership with the Texas Stars, the minor league affiliate of the Dallas Stars. During all of these accomplishments, there was another Texas based organization forming, Dallas-Fort Worth Street Hockey.

Dallas-Fort Worth Street Hockey (DFW Street Hockey), originated in 2019, and just so happened to also be founded by a group of players who had also relocated from the Northeast. DFW Street Hockey currently hosts Sunday pick-up ball hockey, which sounds all too familiar to the players in Austin. The hope is that DFW will be able to host, at minimum, a 4-team league in 2021, as well as their very own national tournament. In 2020, DFW traveled to Austin to participate in a very popular rivalry series called “The Clash of the Texans,” which consisted of DFW All-Stars squaring off against Texas Ball Hockey’s best in a 2-game event, where each side won a game. Dallas-Fort Worth Street Hockey and Texas Ball Hockey are currently working out the logistics to incorporate Schreveport, Texas (Red River Hockey Club) and Beaumont Ball Hockey in the plans to become the next division of the National Ball Hockey League.



There are many recognizable names leading the charge for Dallas-Fort Worth. Those names include Mike Magliola (Long Island Demons), Mike Tesauo (New Jersey Riots/Lunatics/Hired Guns/Suns), Nick Stenderowicz (Philadelphia, Team Justice, The Wizards, Team Chill), Tory Bratton (South Jersey, Team USA Women’s, Ice Hockey at Holy Cross), Harry Sye (Pittsburgh God’s, Team USA Masters). Tory Bratton has been working within the community of Haslet, Texas to resurface a rink, organize youth and adult leagues, but most importantly to “grow the game.”

This is incredible progress in such a short amount of time, in a state that is not known to be a hockey hotbed. “My biggest piece of advice to someone looking to grow a local league, and I told this to Mags (Mike Magliola of DFW) when he was starting things up there, is simply this: JUST PLAY!” says Ortiz. “Set a day and time weekly and show up and play with what you’ve got. It doesn’t matter if it’s half rink, single goalie, no goalie, goalie wearing a baseball glove and a pillow for a cup (actually happened once). JUST PLAY!” he continued. “You’ll have a lot of folks asking, ‘Well, do we have enough players?’ ‘Is it worth me coming?’ ‘Do we have two goalies?’ If you start flaking or canceling because of poor turnouts, it’s not going to last long. Tell them to show up! Those who flat out love the game will be there, and the rest will follow suit when they know your league is built around dependable and passionate individuals.”



For those of you who are interested in playing ball hockey in Texas, Texas Ball Hockey has hosted the Anarchy of Austin tournament each of the last 3 years. This tournament is primarily for the love of the sport, socializing, and getting to see the great city of Austin, which, to the people in this proudful town, is much more commendable than winning a shiny trophy. The future of ball hockey is promising in Texas!


NATIONAL BALL HOCKEY LEAGUE

CHICAGO | MASSACHUSETTS | PITTSBURGH | SOUTH JERSEY | TEXAS | WASHINGTON D.C.




APRIL 2021

MENS BALL HOCKEY, AGE 16+
FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UPDATES

 @NATIONALBALLHOCKEYLEAGUE

 FACEBOOK.COM/NBHL2020

 @NBHL_BALLHOCKEY

 THE NBHL.COM





ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

TWO \$2,500 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS
Presented by The Filipowski Foundation

This award will be presented to one male and one female ball hockey player that has recently graduated from high school looking to further their education in either a college, university, or technical trade school. Applications will be available the entire month of August. A \$2500 check will be presented to the winners on Labor Day. **APPLY NOW BY VISITING:**

usaballhockey.com/scholarship



USA BALL HOCKEY
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

two thousand five hundred

\$2,500.00

NON NEGOTIABLE



USA BALL HOCKEY
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

two thousand five hundred

\$2,500.00

NON NEGOTIABLE



BAUER



The Filipowski Foundation

201



© USA BALL HOCKEY, Inc.
www.usaballhockey.com

Published by USA Ball Hockey Foundation.

The information in this publication is proprietary. In no event shall all or any portion of this publication be disclosed or disseminated without the express written permission of USABH.

Writers: Dan Coldwell and Steve Scian

Editors: Kimberly Herschk and Stephanie Hornick

Design: Jason Glista, Tug McErlain and Anthony Sanrocco

Photo Credits: Maryellen Gallin, Bailey Hahn, Janet Hill, Terri Milby, Mark Ott, Lemar Ortiz and Harry Sye

For further information on USA Ball Hockey, please contact us at info@usaballhockey.com.

Send Us Your News!

We welcome and encourage submissions, suggestions, and ideas from all USA Ball Hockey fans, coaches, players, leagues, and tournaments. The deadline for our next issue is September 15, 2020.

© 2020 USA Ball Hockey Foundation. All Rights Reserved.